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## PRELIMINARY CONSTRUCTION OF A COURSE OF STUDY IN READING

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**I**  
**E**ARLY in the fall of 1924 a group of elementary school teachers<sup>1</sup> of Hibbing, Minnesota, voluntarily undertook the construction of a course of study in reading. This work has been continued for more than a year and a half and will be for some time to come.

It is the purpose of this discussion to present the technique which is being used in the determination of the content of this course of study. It is not the intention here to lay claim to perfection in the method of procedure used nor to criticize other procedures in operation in various city school systems. The writer merely wishes to present the technique of curriculum construction as used at Hibbing.

The determination of the content of the Hibbing course of study in reading is based upon the doctrine of social utility. This theory of curriculum construction was chosen because it seems to express best the true purpose of public education in a democracy; because it has proved itself to be useful and practicable; and because it has received wide acceptance as a fundamental educational philosophy by curriculum experts, by intelligent school men in the field, and by laymen.

This doctrine of social utility sets forth the proposition that the purpose of all instruc-

<sup>1</sup> The writer is indebted to the following for co-operative work in the construction of the course of study: Ruth Bang, Catherine E. Cuniff, Faye Cuzner, Mary E. Kearney, Frances C. Kratzke, Elsie M. McKibben, Viola M. Nelson, Evelyn F. Peterson, Lillian N. Samuelson, Ethel E. Strom, Mollie B. Wolfe.

tion in the elementary school is to provide pupils with those abilities which are needed in meeting successfully the desirable and important situations of life.

Thus is pointed out the necessity of scientific analyses of life activities for the purpose of determining important and desirable life situations and the abilities which need to be developed for meeting these situations successfully. These analyses, in making a true application of the doctrine of social utility, should select only those life situations which are common and frequent, or crucial, in occurrence, and which are of a desirable type. They should also select these important situations from all age levels of life and from various localities.

When the doctrine of social utility is applied to the determination of the content of the course of study in reading, it is obvious that the first purpose of instruction in reading is to provide the pupil with the numerous abilities needed in meeting successfully the important and desirable life situations that require an ability to read. This purpose points to the necessity of determining the life situations that require an ability to read.

## II

**T**HUS the first technical step in the construction of the course of study is the discovery of the reading situations of life. Unfortunately, few investigations of such situa-

tions have been made. Gray<sup>1</sup>, in studying the reading activities of some nine hundred persons, found that people read for a wide variety of purposes. Reports from teachers<sup>2</sup> show that pupils read for many different purposes. The results of a somewhat extensive study made by the course of study group at Hibbing, combined with those of previous studies, have produced a compilation of numerous reading situations of life, and the classification of these situations into four main groups.

These four main groups of situations are as follows: (1) those situations in which one reads to oneself for the purpose of obtaining information; (2) those situations in which one reads to oneself for the purpose of obtaining recreation; (3) those situations in which one reads aloud to others for the purpose of providing information; (4) those situations in which one reads aloud to others for the purpose of providing recreation. Because the abilities required by each group of situations are not identical, and because the acquisition of the abilities involved in each group will require different methods and materials, the course of study in reading provides for four different types of reading instruction which are, respectively: (1) the work type of silent reading; (2) the recreatory type of silent reading; (3) the work type of oral reading; (4) the recreatory type of oral reading.

Within each group of situations are several types. By actual count, as presented in the Hibbing course of study, the first group includes twelve different types of situations; the second group includes eight different types; the third group, six; and the fourth group, five. To provide the teacher with criteria for judging the merits of her classroom procedure, and to enable her to keep continually before her the purpose for which her instruction is given, each type of situation is printed in the course of study with several accompanying examples. It is not possible here to present all this elaborate material.

<sup>1</sup> Gray, W. S. "The Importance of Intelligent Silent Reading" *Elementary School Journal*. January 1924. pp. 348-356

<sup>2</sup> Gray, W. S. "The Relation between Reading and Study" *National Education Association. Addresses and Proceedings* 57 pp. 580-586

The following presents one type of situation, with examples, taken from each group as given in the course of study:

- I. Sample from that group which includes situations in which one reads to oneself for the purpose of obtaining information.

Type 1. Situations typical of those in which one reads for the purpose of obtaining and acting upon directions, advertisements, notices, etc.

*Examples:*

- a. reading an advertisement to obtain information concerning a sale which the reader wishes to attend.
- b. reading to discover how to attract birds to a neighborhood.
- c. reading to discover how to turn in a fire alarm.
- d. reading the notice of a called meeting which the reader wishes to attend.

- II. Sample from that group which includes those situations in which one reads to oneself for the purpose of securing recreation.

Type 1. Situations typical of those in which one reads for the purpose of enlarging the field of one's vicarious interests.

*Examples:*

- a. reading biography to increase one's appreciation of the lives of eminent people.
- b. reading detailed treatments of historical incidents taking place in the vicinity of Mount Vernon before or after making a visit to that locality.
- c. reading to become acquainted with the best of modern plays.

- III. Sample from that group which includes those situations in which one reads aloud to others for the purpose of providing information.

Type 1. Situations typical of those in which one reads aloud to others for the purpose of contributing information towards the solution of a problem under discussion.

*Examples:*

- a. reading material on the cultivation of the rubber plant to members of a class when this particular problem is under discussion.
- b. reading the population figures of certain cities when the relative size of these cities is under dispute.
- c. reading a paper on popular government to a group which is making a study of that problem.

- IV. Sample from that group which includes those situations in which one reads aloud to others for the purpose of providing recreation.

Type 1. Situations typical of those in which one reads aloud to others for the purpose of relieving the strain of day's work.

*Examples:*

- a. reading a story aloud from a popular fiction magazine such as the *Saturday Evening Post*.
- b. reading popular sympathetic poetry aloud.
- c. reading aloud the world news from the newspaper or a magazine such as the *Literary Digest*.

### III

THE second technical step involved in the construction course of study is concerned with the discovery of the objectives of reading.

If the purpose of instruction in reading is to provide the pupil with the numerous abilities needed in meeting successfully the reading situations of life, it is possible that the objectives of such instruction may be best expressed in terms of these abilities, or, in other words, in terms of the numerous knowledges, skills, habits, attitudes, and appreciations which the reading situations of life require upon the part of the successful reader.

The determination of these abilities requires an extensive and highly detailed analysis of the reading situations. The course of study group has just completed this task in preliminary form. Because it was felt that the objectives of reading had too long been expressed in general, vague, and philosophical terms, and because it was believed that detailed treatment of objectives would increase the efficiency of learning, it was decided to carry the analysis into terms of very minutely isolated abilities.

It is not possible at this point to present the long list of these detailed abilities. For purposes of illustration a small unit of those abilities involved in those situations in which one reads to oneself for the purpose of obtaining information will be presented.

#### *Sample Objectives of the Work Type of Silent Reading.*

- I. General Objective: (This general objective summarizes all the abilities needed in meeting situations of this type.)

The acquisition upon the part of the individual of those knowledges, skills, habits, and attitudes bound up in the ability to study, in the ability to work with books, in the ability to locate and digest information, and in the development of an interest in acquiring information.

- II. Major Objectives: (These four major objectives give a statement of the four classes into which the abilities required in meeting situations of this type may be grouped.)<sup>1</sup>

1. The acquisition upon the part of the individual of those knowledges, skills, habits, and attitudes bound up in the ability to locate information quickly and accurately in the light of the problem at hand.
2. The acquisition upon the part of the individual of those knowledges, skills, habits, and attitudes bound up in the ability to comprehend, evaluate, and select information quickly and accurately in the light of the problem at hand.
3. The acquisition upon the part of the individual of those knowledges, skills, habits, and attitudes bound up in the ability to organize material quickly and accurately in the light of the problem at hand.
4. The acquisition upon the part of the individual of those knowledges, skills, habits, and attitudes bound up in the ability to decide quickly and accurately what part of the material read should be remembered in the light of the problem at hand, and how to memorize it.

- III. Minor Objectives: (To illustrate "minor objectives" a list of those concerned with only Major Objective No. 1 is presented)

1. a realization of the need of obtaining information when confronted.
2. a knowledge of what the common sources of information are.
3. use of the public library.
4. ability to handle books with proper care.
5. ability to use certain printed aids of a book such as running heads, side heads, sectional heads, chapter headings, footnotes, list of maps, illustrations, etc.
6. ability to see the relationship between the problem at hand and the title and other printed parts of a book.

<sup>1</sup> This classification of the abilities into these four groups is that of Dr. Ernest Horn, College of Education, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Ia.

7. ability to use the index.
8. ability to use the table of contents.
9. ability to use the library card file.
10. ability to use the reader's guide.
11. ability to use the encyclopedia.
12. ability to use year books such as the World Almanac.
13. ability to use the atlas.
14. ability to use the dictionary.
15. ability to use the telephone and city directory.
16. ability to use the railway guide.
17. ability to use bound volumes of magazines.
18. ability to skim.
19. ability to interpret statistical tables, charts, graphs, etc.

IV. Detailed Objectives: (To illustrate the degree to which the objectives have been isolated, a list of those detailed objectives concerned with only the use of the index, Minor Objective No. 7, is presented)

1. a knowledge of the content, purpose, and value of the index.
2. a knowledge of the location of the index.
3. ability to alphabetize.
4. a knowledge of the different forms in which the material of the index may be arranged.
5. a knowledge of the meaning of different forms of punctuation as used in the index.
6. a knowledge of the meaning of main heads and sub heads as used in the index.
7. a knowledge of various marks and signs as used in the index such as parentheses, the dash, bold-face type, italics, Fig.
8. the ability to determine which word in the statement of a problem is the best to use as the "key" word for locating references on the problem in the index.
9. the ability to choose words other than the main "key" word which might give additional references on the problem.
10. the ability to choose the proper sub-topic.
11. the ability to use cross references.
12. the ability to locate quickly on the page the information to which the index refers.
13. the habit of using the index when searching for information in a book instead of thumbing through the pages.

The preceding material illustrates the degree to which the objectives of instruction in reading have been analyzed. The detailed objectives refer to only one minor objective. This minor objective is included under only

one of the four major objectives of one of four types of reading instruction. A realization of this fact shows the tremendous amount of work involved in the minute isolation of objectives. It is believed that such procedure will greatly enhance the efficiency of classroom instruction.

#### IV

THE third technical step relates to the discovery of efficient methods and materials of instruction in reading.

As a fundamental criterion for the selection of methods and materials the course of study group has set up the proposition that particular method or piece of material to be selected must show itself to be of distinct and superior value in making a definite worthwhile contribution to the attainment of one or more detailed objectives.

At the present time the courses of study group, in the process of selecting methods and materials, uses the four following means of determining the value of a piece of material or a particular method:

*First.* Believing that the value of materials and methods must ultimately be determined by experimental research, the group makes what selections it can upon the basis of the results of such previous research rather than upon personal opinion or individual bias.

*Second.* While it is true that a vast amount of research has been carried on in the field of reading during the past ten years, it is not possible to select all methods and materials upon the basis of experimental evidence for the simple reason that evidence exists in connection with only a very few problems related to methods and materials. Hence it is necessary in the majority of cases to make the selection upon the basis of sound and successful educational experience and expert opinion. This procedure will be necessary for years to come, until the slow results of experimental work can replace opinion with fact.

*Third.* In those numerous cases where no experimental evidence, no available expert



opinion, nor results of educational experience can be found, the group is dependent upon itself for construction of possible methods and materials. In this connection assignments are made covering very small units of work, usually a "minor" objective. Two or three people working together will set up, in the light of their daily classroom experience, prospective methods and materials for attaining this single isolated objective. When completed this piece of material is presented by the authors to the entire course of study group, during which time it undergoes such changes as seem desirable to the group. The material is then mimeographed in an exceedingly detailed form and distributed among classroom teachers who are urged to suggest needed changes. From time to time this unit of work is brought back to the course of study group for that revision and refinement which, during classroom tryouts, is found to be necessary. By this procedure it is possible not only to revise and refine the material according to the results of its use in the classroom, but also to gather important information relative to the grading of objectives. The following illustrates in temporary form a piece of material derived in this manner. This illustrative material is concerned with only one detailed objective.

Sample piece of preliminary material concerned with the ability to alphabetize

- I. Major Objective: The acquisition upon the part of the individual of those knowledges, skills, habits, and attitudes bound up in the ability to locate information quickly and accurately in the light of the problem at hand.
- II. Minor Objective No. 7 Ability to use index.
- III. Detailed Objective No. 3 Ability to alphabetize.<sup>1</sup>
- IV. Materials: Informal tests, telephone book, and other familiar material arranged alphabetically, set of books with a good index.
- V. Procedure:
  1. In teaching pupils to alphabetize it may be worthwhile to first determine whether or not this ability is already possessed. This can be reasonably done by the use of an informal test. The following illustrates this type of test:

To the Pupil: Arrange the following words in alphabetical order: corn, cattle, dairy, wheat, flax, foods, apples, apricots, lemons.

Such test should contain the simplest and the most difficult elements of alphabetizing. The distinguishing letter should be as far advanced in the word as is commonly found. The test should contain at least twenty words. If pupils are able to alphabetize to the extent that they can easily locate words in common sources of information, there is no need of further instruction in this ability. There should be, however, many situations supplied in which the pupil has ample opportunity for practicing his ability. If the results of informal testing and testing with common sources of information show that pupils do not know how to alphabetize, there is need of a series of lessons to provide training in this ability.

2. In beginning the teaching process the establishment of a feeling of need for knowing how to alphabetize may enhance the learning conditions. Attempts to tie up the use of alphabetizing with the pupil's experience. Perhaps this may be done by showing that the material of the telephone book and mother's recipe cabinet is arranged alphabetically. Try to show that one cannot use the index unless he knows how to alphabetize. Bring into the classroom as many situations and materials as possible which occur in the child's life and which require an ability to alphabetize.

3. In alphabetizing it is necessary to know the names of the letters of the alphabet. The teacher may introduce this step as follows: Ask different pupils to give their first or last names. These and other names may be written on the board. Ask, "Whose name begins with A? with S? with T?" Ask, "What is the first letter of Robert's name? of Harry's?" Place letters on the board and ask children to name them. Ask for all the letters. Have pupils point to certain letter as teacher calls them. Gradually develop the entire alphabet on the board, giving it its proper name. Each pupil should be able to recognize every letter in the alphabet. Pupils who do not should be given special drill in recognizing letters.

4. In addition to recognizing each letter in the alphabet, the pupil should know the relative position of the various letters. Have the pupils examine the index of a book, the telephone book, or any list of materials arranged alphabetically. Ask with what letter the first word begins; the last word; other words. Ask such questions as, what letter is before T? before M? after C? before B? after R? between L and N? Is C near the beginning or end of the alphabet? Do you go backward or forward from S to P? Much drill of this type should be given. Every effort should be made to pro-

<sup>1</sup> For a good presentation of the attack on the alphabetizing problem see Horn, E. and McBroom, M: *Learn to Study Readers*. Book III Manual of Directions, pp. 9-10. Ginn & Co., Chicago. 1924.

vide each pupil with a knowledge of the relative position of the various letters of the alphabet.

5. Each pupil should learn what are the deciding factors that determine where a word is placed in an alphabetical list. Place a number of words (words that commonly occur in an index) on the board. Ask which word should come first in an alphabetical list. Second. Ask how one can decide. Each pupil should see that the first deciding factor is the first letter in the word. Informal tests or exercises covering this ability should be given frequently.

Place a new list of words on the board. This list should contain some words that have the same initial letter but different second letters. Ask pupils to arrange this list in alphabetical order. Ask which word should come first. Second. Ask how one can decide. Each pupil should learn that in comparing two words which begin with the same letter, the factor which determines the relative position of the words is the second letter.

This same procedure may be followed for words which have the first, three, four, and five letters alike.

6. It will aid in retaining the ability to alphabetize to give informal tests frequently and to supply numerous situations in which the pupil is required to use this ability.

*Fourth.* From time to time experimental research, which provides data for judging the relative value of methods and of materials, is carried on in the local system.

While these procedures are tedious and are slow in providing adequate data, it is felt

that such plans for selecting methods and materials are necessary; and, furthermore, that they involve an attitude and practice which is essential to the construction of any course of study which lays claim to being even partially scientific.

## V

**E**VEN when tentative methods and materials have been formulated much remains to be done. Such methods and materials must be revised from time to time as classroom experience and experimental data shows the need of such change. This process of refinement must necessarily mean a continually growing course of study.

In addition much work will need to be done upon the grading of objectives. At present little is really known concerning this matter. Where the grade location has not already been reasonably determined by experiment, tentative location may be made through classroom tryouts. In so far as it has been determined, those objectives which represent abilities that are most common and least difficult are placed in the lower grades.

A great deal of work will need to be done in providing remedial instruction and in adapting material to individual differences. Such work will follow the preliminary completion of the course of study.

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## A POINT OF VIEW IN LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR THE TEACHER

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### *Guiding Principles*

THE problem of language training is the problem of stimulating and directing the thought growth of children, adding to their information, enlarging their experiences, and interpreting life and environment to them through giving them an abundance of opportunities to make and express reactions to it.

Training in language, then, consists in producing an abundance of situations that will stimulate ideas, afford experiences in expressing ideas in ways that are interesting to children, furnish opportunities for acquainting children with such conventionalities about form of expression as will increase the effectiveness of their expression and prevent them from being out of adjustment with the language customs that are held as standard.

The situations produced in language training should be in keeping with the present needs and interests of the children and, at the same time, should furnish leads to further activities of higher order. As the simple excursion to the village store can be used to broaden and intensify interest in how other people live, and so lead to a knowledge of interdependence and of personal responsibility, the discussions and conversations through which these attitudes are built should lead to ever increasing power of expression. Canned oysters can lead us to the seaside, into the life of the fisherman, into the wonderful variety of nature and man's use of it, but the path is one of language. In talking and writing about it, children must constantly ask, "Did I tell what I wanted to tell?" "Can I say that more clearly?" "Were the listeners interested?" They must think to some delightful purpose, they must read to satisfy thought.

In the elementary school, expression should be free and spontaneous and the pruning should take place afterward if it cannot be avoided. Expression must be more abundant than it can be if pupils must reject ideas because they do not fit easily into a prescribed mold. Grammatical correctness, good form, accuracy in spelling are worthy things, but if the teacher insists upon them in such way as to confuse the speaker or writer and so hamper expression, a greater value will be destroyed than perfect form can ever replace.

The lecturer on the platform would have small hope of convincing his hearers if he were constantly interrupted by some one who wished to criticise his style. The joy of telling a story or narrating an experience is killed by criticism during the telling.

Only those conventionalities should be taught that common sense and scientific testing endorse as those that will help secure the purposes for which they are taught. Variety, sentence sense, paragraphing, simple punctuation, correct pronunciation are essential to clear, forceful expression, but they must rise out of situations which give point to teaching and learning.

No separate instruction is to be given in formal grammar in the elementary grades. Such grammatical knowledge as is needed by the pupils should grow out of the study of language. The facts thus taught, however, are to be sufficiently impressed to be retained.

Power to think, speak and write well is the end to be attained. To this end, language training should not be confined to a mere language period, but must be a part of every exercise of the day.

Language is specific and individual. Exercises should arise out of typical and natural situations in answer to needs recognized by



the child as worth while. By making use of child interests, imagination, curiosity, play, competition, collecting, the work can be made joyous and sincere.

All effort toward expression is in a broad sense composition. Oral composition deserves more attention than other forms, and should be measured by standards equally high. No form of expression that meets the child's needs should be neglected. Drawing, modelling, cutting, dramatization are as truly forms of expression as are speaking and writing, and they are powerful factors in stimulating and in expressing thought. "Drawing," said a child, "is thinking and then marking a line round the think." In drawing as in play the real child comes out to meet the world. The charm of favorite books often lies as much in the expression through illustration as in the word pictures. The stories and poems that make us want to draw pictures or dance in the wind have spoken very real messages which are but intensified by expression. The illustrated letter carries a little more of the writer along with it. Imagination and appreciation of the beautiful are developed by drawing, and they in turn contribute to every form of expression.

It is important that the pleasure in expressing ideas be preserved to children. This should be done by utilizing situations out of which will arise desire for expression. Environmental interests, toys, pets, games, giving directions, will furnish interesting topics for conversation and description.

Language is vital only as it relates to and grows out of needs and interests. All language exercises should look to definite results in the daily activities of the pupils.

#### *The Teacher's Language*

The greatest possession that a person can have is the power to use the English language; the ability to stand on his feet and say things. It is through language that we are able to influence other people, to enter into social relations with them. The more effective a person is in the use of language, the more efficiently can he take his part in life. The teacher who uses language with finish and

force, who can shape the skillful question, who can explain interestingly, who can tell a story well has a great advantage over the one whose speech is halting and crude.

Since children learn to speak by imitation, too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the importance of a high standard of excellence in the language of the teacher. It must at all times be pure, correct and accurate if we are to hope for very definite results from her language work.

#### *Aims of Language Teaching*

The Teacher should endeavor—

To preserve to children the pleasure of free expression of thought,

To increase ability to think, listen, speak, and write effectively,

To establish habits of correct use of words in spoken and written English,

To develop an appreciation of the beautiful in English.

#### *How to Attain the Aims*

In order to secure interested effort in oral or written language, it is necessary that pupils have something interesting to talk or write about. When children come to school they have an abundant store of experiences, opinions, and ideas which they can express effectively, given the proper stimulus. Experiences from the home life, the playground, amusements, duties; from things they have heard, seen and done; from stories of earlier times in community life furnish an almost endless variety of subjects. The clever trick my pet can do, when I learned to swim, how we surprised mother, the biggest fish I ever caught are things full of the breath of life. Actual experiences and subjects that come within the range of the child's knowledge and interests constitute the most desirable language material.

It is the teacher's problem to help the child realize that he has something worth while to talk about and to encourage the use of all forms of expression as effective means of attaining ability. The most effective help that the teacher can give is to create a wholesome atmosphere and right conditions for growth which will lead the learner to develop him-



self by participating in the activities of the group.

Children are interested in expression only when there is a definite end in view. A desire to inform or to give pleasure to others, the personal satisfaction that comes from creation, a desire to put ideas or communications into permanent form are ends which will stimulate expression. A school club or society to meet once or twice a month in which original stories, plays, debates, or memorized selections and songs may be presented is an effective means for motivating the language work and developing interest. The class news bulletin from which things are selected to make up the school paper or county magazine offers not only a delightful spur to excellent composition but is also a means of establishing standards for criticism and giving practice in editorial activities.

#### *Thinking for Expression*

Back of all forceful expression lies the power to think clearly. Halting, stumbling speech may often be attributed to the fact that thought has not been comprehended. Here the teacher and classmates can do much by sympathetic questioning. It will be well to bear in mind that while clear thinking is an aid to expression, attempt at expression also helps to clearer thinking.

#### *Activities and Materials*

**TALKING.** For the reason that adults as well as children talk much more than they write, and because a person's degree of culture and education is often judged by his speech, it is essential that spoken English be emphasized in every elementary school. The aim is to train children to talk fluently, coherently, convincingly and correctly. To this end it is well to plan conversation periods for encouraging them to talk. A lesson of promiscuous babbling by first one pupil and then another, or by several talking at once is of no value. Neither is the lesson which consists of very formal stereotyped repetition with no interest on the part of the pupils. The teacher must direct the pupils, without curbing their enthusiasm, to accomplish something definite during each recitation.

Teacher: Let's talk about the picture books that we are going to make of our families. Mary, what kind of cover will you choose? Mary: I think blue is prettiest. May I have blue? And so on. When the class period is over some definite plans have been made for making the booklets and the pupils have had excellent practice in talking. There must always be something about which pupils are interested to talk and no period should close without some definite accomplishment. The teacher may well keep in mind the following points:

Teach interesting ways of beginning.

Teach the use of time order.

Emphasize the importance of strong closing sentences.

Train pupils to hear; and to make helpful criticisms.

**OBSERVATION LESSONS AND REPORTS.** After interest has been aroused in the conversation period about some object closely related to the life of the children, they may be asked to observe it carefully for a few days and to report the results of the observation in the language class. The school aquarium, the making of weather charts, pets sometime brought to school, excursions help to make seeing eyes and interesting talkers.

**REPRODUCTION OF STORIES.** Storytelling has an important place in the reading period. Short stories only should be used in the language period, and the telling of them should help the pupils to gain confidence in talking before the group, in speaking distinctly and in using good English.

**RECITATIONS.** The teacher who does not carefully survey the language in all recitations and try to bring it to a high standard of excellence will find her regular language exercises barren of lasting results. The recitation period affords constant practice in the actual use of purposeful language. Reading, nature study, health, industrial arts furnish abundant materials for language lessons as well as opportunity for judging to what extent teaching is resultful.

**MEMORIZING.** Memorizing is an activity that requires a word of caution. It is a viola-

tion of educational principles to force children to memorize, but it is the function of the teacher to create a desire on the part of the child to do so. A well modulated voice, vivid word pictures, and a sincere appreciation on the part of the teacher will stimulate interest in well selected poetry and prose. In presenting a poem, some such order as the following may prove helpful:

Setting of the poem given in the form of an improvised story bearing on the thought of the selection.

Reading of the entire poem by the teacher.

Spontaneous but directed discussion of the pictures which the poem presents.

Study of the unusual words in the poem.

Second reading of the poem as a whole.

**DRAMATIZATION.** The purpose of dramatization in the elementary grades is three fold: to motivate the careful study of a selection; to develop correct oral presentation; and to stimulate the imagination.

Teachers must be careful not to undertake the dramatization of selections that are not well adapted to such treatment. First stories must be short. A suggestive procedure is given below:

The story should be told or read aloud.

There should be a class discussion of thought and characters.

Children should decide what characters are necessary and how the play may be staged in the schoolroom.

All variations in the dialogue should be made by the children.

Originality in this work should be exercised to an increasing extent from grade to grade.

**CORRECT USAGE.** "Mend your speech a little lest it may mar your fortune." There are certain errors that are common to localities. For this reason it is suggested that both teacher and pupils listen for errors and list those that are commonly made in and out of school to be used as the basis for correction drills. They may well be extended to cover other more or less tangible phases of speech: right posture, clear tones, proper enunciation and pronunciation, as well as

correctness in grammar deserve emphatic attention.

Lists of common errors for individual grades should be brief enough to focus the attention of teacher and pupils upon a relatively few points.

A language vigilance committee of three or more in each class, the personnel of which should be changed about every two weeks, or a Better Speech Club may help to improve the language of the school and community.

### *Writing*

Oral discussion of any topic or subject paves the way for more effective written composition. A story well told is half written.

The successful language teacher will not minimize correctness, but she will not sacrifice thought to form. Her task in helping the children resolves into three points:

Guiding the selection of subjects that are personal, definite, brief and pointed.

Providing good models as a stimulus to effort.

Encouraging frequent practice.

**LETTER WRITING.** Most people compose little in written form except letters. This is sufficient reason why unusual emphasis should be placed upon letter writing. "Here then is the task for the writer; to send his greeting, his best self through a letter, to be jolly, thoughtful, sympathetic, as the case may require, and yet write nothing that he will afterward be ashamed of or regret having written." (Briggs and McKinney.)

The best motive for friendly letters is correspondence with children of the same age. This may be extended to children in other parts of the country or world.

**STORIES, PLAYS AND VERSE.** There are three main sources of original story material: the teller's own personal experiences; everyday human interest happenings, such as are discovered and reported through newspapers and magazines; and the common folk tales carried in the memories of the older people of a community. All are within ready reach of the school room. To develop interest in story-telling, pupils must be given opportunities to tell tales that appeal to them.

A play is but a story acted, and when children are permitted to make a story into a play it becomes a vivid reality to them. Play acting affords valuable returns: It adds a joy element to learning; it promotes ease and poise; it offers excellent oral practice; it cultivates authorship.

In writing plays it is necessary that pupils get the spirit of the time and characters. They must constantly ask themselves, "How would I speak and act in such a place?" "How would that have been said in those days?"

The following must be worked out in planning a play:

Number of acts or scenes needed.

Setting for each act or scene.

Necessary characters.

A good introduction.

A fitting close.

Climax.

The teacher of today will find it relatively easy to capitalize upon the child's innate love of rhythm and rhyme to lead him on to the making of simple original verses. First grade pupils everywhere are learning to love beautiful thought and speech through the making of co-operative verses. At the Lincoln school, New York City, one of the teachers has a special drawer into which the children may put their poems with or without the name of the author. It is not idle praise to say that some of the poems written by these children are worthy of Shelley or Keats.

When boys learn that the greatest poets of the world have been men they cease to feel that the making of verse is effeminate and something to be ashamed of. The history of the troubadours and the minstrels of old, the ballads, historical poems, those of power and achievement open up gateways into beauties of speech and thought that challenge interest.

**CRITICISM.** Standards in written composition range from one simple sentence for the first grade to an amount not to exceed that which can be written on an ordinary page of paper for the sixth grade. Children write with more interest and greater care if they know that quality is demanded rather than quantity.

"In teaching children to criticise, teachers should have in mind a definite plan of development. Points like the following are suggested:

Read the composition through.

Is it interesting? Tell one thing that made it so.

Did the writer keep to the subject? Did he put anything in that was unnecessary?

What expressions were new to you?

Indicate a particular good sentence or sentences.

Indicate a sentence or sentences that could be improved.

Restate the sentence that needs improving.

Correct grammatical errors.

Correct mechanical errors."—*Mahoney*.

**COPYING AND DICTATION.** Copying and dictation are useful as occasional exercises to train pupils in observation and in habits of using correct form. There should be a real purpose served by the exercises. Interest in making booklets and posters afford opportunity for purposeful work of this type.

It is necessary to have an outline of points before the class when the pupils are ready to check their work. The following is suggestive:

Margin.

Indenting and paragraphing.

Capitals.

Periods and question marks.

Apostrophe

Comma.

Quotation marks.

Spelling.

#### *Formal Language Instruction*

**WORD STUDY.** Formal instruction in the meaning and use of words has a definite value if the list of words is properly selected upon a basis of the felt needs of the class and if natural drills are provided. Mere formal use will not make a word a part of a child's vocabulary. The teacher who encourages her class to make the spelling lesson, who carefully notes the words that children ask her to spell for them will do well to work through these interests in vocabulary building. The new word in content that indicates its meaning is always the best approach.

(Continued on page 170)



## THE TEACHERS' ENGLISH\*

MRS. C. L. SIMMERS

*Assistant Instructor in English, Winona State Teachers College, Winona, Minn.*

**B**Y OUR words we shall be known as educated or uneducated, refined or unrefined, cultured or uncultured. Some one has said that a man may have the mind of a Milton, but unless he has also the power of expression he will forever remain "mute" and "inglorious." He may have the military genius of a Napoleon, but unless he be master of spoken and written words he will be forever handicapped in his leadership of men.

There is no business or profession, no work of any kind in which our success does not depend in a large measure upon the skill with which we use the English language. In the teaching profession, perhaps more than in any other walk of life, we need this skill highly developed. If the teacher does not have it, she cannot hope to lead her pupils into habits of clear and correct expression. It is this ability, above all others, that marks the educated person; therefore it is important that we seek to increase our ability in the use of our language, and above all to realize how much power we might be gaining over our native tongue by using it as well as we know how in all our everyday conversation. We should not leave our best in English to be used on special occasions. Things used occasionally are not used with ease or effectiveness.

A good workman procures the best available tools, then uses them with care and discretion. A carpenter would not ply an ax where a saw should be used. A painter would not be satisfied with one brush for all spaces. Words are our tools. They should be chosen well, then used with as much care as are the implements plied by our hands.

We have no right to handicap words in their work, as we do when we mispronounce them. "Geography," "just," "because," "get," "where" and "our" are a few of the words that would be justified in allowing their angry passions to rise. Indeed it is probable that

they would be in a continuously angry mood, could they be allowed to defend themselves in our halls and classrooms. A picture loses some of its attractiveness when called "pitcher," children lose some of their charm when called "childern" and we lose a large part of our dignity when we say "uv," "fur," "wuz," "whur," and "gorgraphy."

There is also a large group of words that might well be fearful lest their identity be lost. We as individuals, would object strenuously to having our identity so merged into that of another that we could not be recognized as separate persons. But this is the state in which many words are placed. Who but an American, knows that "gimme," "donchu," and "dijja" are supposed to be translated as "give me," "don't you" and "did you?" We laugh at the foreigner who says, "I bane to de city," or "I tank I go over by Duloot de next day after now." But we say to him (and do not expect him to laugh) "Ole, ya gotta gimme a hundred dollars an acre fur the land cuz, donchu know, are improvements costs a lotta money." If words could be judges they would undoubtedly choose to be used as the foreigner used them and would probably decide that the laugh (if there is one) should be at our expense.

Doctor Pound, Dean of the Harvard Law School, says that he finds such words as those above, used in examination papers written by his graduate students. He further states that he trembles for the future of our language.

Comparatively few people can use music and paint to make their contribution to the world, but the great majority of us can gain an efficiency in the use of our language that will enable us to express ourselves accurately, effectively and artistically and by so doing, give our best to the world.

\* From a talk to students at Winona State Teachers College, Winona, Minnesota.

## ON ATTAINING A COMMON STANDARD

ELLEN M. GEYER

*Assistant Professor of English, University of Pittsburgh*

DURING the autumn quarter, the writer was invited as an extension lecturer to go to a town in the vicinity of Pittsburgh to supervise the English in the grades and incidentally to make the work of the teachers easier. The superintendent did not make quite clear just why he thought the teachers found their work hard or just what he hoped could be offered as a panacea in one semester, except that the school had no course of study. After several periods of visiting, the supervisor saw that the teachers themselves expected a supervisor to do a little superficial teaching, to plan a few entertaining games, to superimpose a bit of delightful technique upon the vague mass of details put together heterogeneously with the idea of fulfilling the state requirements and using a text book and perhaps supplementary texts. There was very little vision of the whole field and practically no feeling of responsibility for the vigorous growth of the seeds planted in any particular corner. No teacher felt, particularly, that she must carry on from the point where the teacher below left off, or that she must know her own standards so thoroughly that she could hand over with her pupils a concise schedule of principles definitely learned. The situation in this school is unique only in that the teachers were eager and alive enough to want to remedy their situation. Judging from the results of the freshmen tests in college English, the waste of unlearning simple matters of everyday use in speech and in writing is pitiful. Pupils give their youth, and teachers give their lives.

Since teachers from all eight grades were present at each meeting, the first problem was to make the lecture hour helpful for each teacher. What seemed like a handicap turned out to be the source of the solution. A course of study to meet the needs of that particular school was our problem; no ready

made one would do; at the end of the semester each teacher must have helped to build her part and at the same time must be thoroughly familiar with the standards and aims of every grade from the primary to the ninth grade. By way of a safe beginning we made mimeographed sheets of the composition standards as set down by Mr. Bernard Sheridan in his *Speaking and Writing English*. Almost from the very first it became evident that the simple sentence, of rudimentary simplicity in the primary grades, and with more ornamentation in the later grades, but nevertheless the simple sentence, was our standard of measurement. Furthermore very little research was necessary to find the limited list of rules for good usage and words commonly misspelled for each grade. If all this was so easily discovered, why was there any problem? There were several reasons: the academic training of the teachers differed in character and amount; their professional training was equally varied; and the teachers not trained to teach English had never given any thought to methods of teaching correct speech, and yet teachers of geography and history must get something out of the term's work and help with our problem of construction.

It was the supervisor's problem to find a common meeting ground and a principle so vital that it would carry through all phases of oral and written language in any class. She hit upon *exposition* for the reason that if the *sentence* was to be our great fundamental every teacher must have the same theory about sentence correctness, what obligations sentences have in paragraphs, and what paragraphs do in the whole theme. We began by drawing our subjects from geography, natural history, and daily life. We experimented with large subjects to evolve the principle that what you include in your talk or written work depends on your pur-

pose on the one hand and on the space in time or paper on the other. The first step was to evolve from a broad topic a number of narrower subjects and to distinguish between title as the trade name for the finished product and the subject as possible material from which the theme was to be built. The next problem was to get a single usable phase of the subject and a single attitude or purpose in talking or in writing about that subject. Our last consideration was the matter of proportioning the space for the various phases of the subject in the spoken or written product according to the subdivisions. In the explanations which follow the reader will notice that the talk limited to two and not more than three minutes and the one page theme are used as the basis. Pupils who understand how long they may talk as well as what they are talking about are more likely to speak with force and correctness. The dividing of broad subjects which follow represent divisions suggested by the teachers. Each teacher could adapt the plan to her own work and pupils.

The first step, then, was to create a uniform notion of what constitutes *unity* in a theme. This we called finding one purpose or reason for talking or writing upon a given subject. We did the rather shop worn exercise of narrowing several all embracing subjects to less inclusive topics, but varied the plan by insisting each time on stating simply the *purpose* in each new narrowing and sketching the new material included under the new division but excluded from the previous topic. For instance:

#### *The Beaver*

1. The beaver was a fur bearing animal—to show the profit in trapping or raising beavers for the market.
2. The life of the beaver—to show that the industry of the beaver and his skill in building have to do with his struggle to keep alive.
3. The beavers under our bridge—to tell what I learned by watching the beavers under our bridge.

#### *Roads*

1. Trade follows the good road—to show why every farmer wants to be on a good road.
2. The discomfort of detours—to show how our trip last summer was spoiled by constant uncertainty about the roads.
3. Why Forbes street is so winding—to recall some of the difficulties which General Forbes met in his effort to break a road over the mountains.
4. The thrill of the good road—to show the temptation which every driver experiences on a smooth, open stretch.

The aim in the diverse topics listed above is, of course, to suggest that there are as many purposes in a topic as there are individuals with varying experiences to write or talk about that topic.

The next step was to see the proper subdivisions as they worked themselves out in the allotted space and in the order of time or of cause and effect. Our plans used either the phrase or the sentence form.

- I. The beaver as a fur bearing animal
  - A. The trapping season.
  - B. Setting the traps.
  - C. Drying the skins.
  - D. Shipping the pelts.
- II. The beavers under our bridge.
  - A. My attention was first called to the beavers because of a fallen tree.
  - B. The beavers cut the trunk with their teeth.
  - C. They saved the tender twigs for food.
  - D. They used their tails both as paddles and as trowels.
- III. The thrill of a good road.
  - A. We started for the lake in high spirits.
  - B. We grew nervous in the city traffic.
  - C. After an hour's crawling we found ourselves almost alone on the Lincoln Highway.
  - D. I shall always remember the smooth road and the sharp wind.

Naturally, these plans are more unified and



coherent than could be expected of grade school children. Our next step was to adapt this mature work. To do this we began using card plans for both oral and written themes. For instance, Theme II, Pupil's Plan

*A Lesson in Work*

- I. *The point I wish to make is:* I learned why beavers have such sharp teeth and flat tails.
- II. *The subdivisions of my point are:*
  - A. My attention was first called to the beavers because of a fallen tree.
  - B. The beavers cut the trunk with their teeth.
  - C. They saved the tender twigs for food.
  - D. They used their tails both as paddles and as trowels.
- III. *The conclusion at which I arrive is:* I learned some interesting things from watching the beavers.

THE following is a brief reproduction of a lesson built upon this plan. The lesson was given in the Continuation school to twelve boys, two of whom had finished the seventh grade, the other ten, the sixth grade.

As immediate preparation for the lesson the teacher stressed the necessity of the speaker's making a point, and the natural subdivisions of the subject in making an explanation, but no formal work in outlining was given. As a final step in guidance the teacher directed the development of the theme by asking questions in the order in which the steps occur in the process of glass making.

*How Glass is Manufactured*

*Teacher:* I want a full description of glass making. As our town has the largest window glass factory and flint glass factory in the world, I believe that every boy in this town should understand just how glass is made. Let us trace the manufacture of glass lenses for automobiles.

John may describe the first step.

*First boy:* Every Monday a box car of sand and a box car of soda comes to the factory. The men unload it and put it in

the factory. The glass mixer takes about fifty pounds of soda and fifty pounds of sand, mixes them, and puts the mixture in a tank.

*Teacher:* The next step, George.

*Second boy:* Shovels full of broken glass are thrown over this mixture of sand and soda and all melts together in the hot tank. When it is all melted it flows into little pots.

*Teacher:* William, what is done with the melted glass?

*Third boy:* A boy, called a gathering boy, with a punty, which is a long iron rod for gathering glass, gathers a large ball of this melted glass and takes it to a workman, called a presser.

*Teacher:* Tell us what the presser does with the melted glass.

*Fourth boy:* The presser works with a press or mold. He fills the mold with the melted glass that the gathering boy has brought to him. He pulls a lever and the mold presses the melted glass into the shape of a lens.

*Teacher:* Is the lens completed?

*Fifth boy:* No, the presser takes the mold out of the press and then the lens out of the mold. He lets the lens cool for two or three minutes and then gives it to a carry-in boy.

*Teacher:* What do you do with it? Where do you carry it?

*Sixth boy:* I am a carry-in boy. I carry the lens on a paddle to the leers and place them in the leers on a big sheet of iron. The leers are like a big oven. They are heated by gas and are very hot. I often toast my sandwiches on them.

*Teacher:* How long is the lens kept in the leers?

*Seventh boy:* The lens is kept in the leers about four hours. It is then taken out, cooled, and given to a girl to inspect. The girl sends the perfect lens to the packing room. If it should have a blister, flaw, or chip, it is thrown back into the tank to be melted over.

*Teacher:* You have all heard a good description of glass making. Harry, I want you to give the whole story. All listen closely to see if Harry describes each step correctly.

Harry had little difficulty in recalling the

(Continued on page 172)

## A READING PROGRAM FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH GRADES

HANNAH M. LINDAHL

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**A**MONG the subjects in the curriculum of the elementary school, reading has always been assigned a place of major importance. However, instruction in reading in the schools of today is not, in any sense, synonymous with instruction in reading during previous decades, for out of the recent research work of scientific educators has come recognition of the need for instruction in the different phases of reading, such as silent reading for pleasure, oral reading for the purpose of entertaining others, rapid reading for the location of information, and careful reading for study purposes, namely, interpretation, retention, and organization.

In order that our reading program might serve to give training in all the various phases of desirable reading abilities, we, this year, adopted the following schedule in all the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in the city:

*Silent reading drill with work-type material:* Two periods each week.

*Oral reading in a real audience situation:* One period each week.

*Silent reading for pleasure:* Two periods each week.

A crowded curriculum does not permit us to give instruction in reading more than one period each day, thus making a total of five periods a week as indicated by the above schedule.

Each of the three distinct types of instruction in our reading program has, for its ultimate goal, the development of certain abilities and the establishment of certain habits. These skills, habits, and attitudes comprise the desirable standard of attainment which we are attempting to have every child reach before he enters the Junior High School.

In the two periods each week devoted to silent reading drill with work-type material, we endeavor to give training in interpretation,

retention, vocabulary, skimming for the purpose of locating information, organizing and outlining, and summarizing. Supplementary books such as the Lincoln Readers and the Bolenius Readers are used for this work.

The ability to read effectively to an audience is the objective of the one period each week used for oral reading. Five or six children in a grade appear on the oral reading program each week. Under the guidance of the teacher, suitable selections are assigned from children's magazines, such as "John Martin's Book," "Child Life," "Little Folks," "St. Nicholas," and "The Youth's Companion." Sometimes short selections are read from the books in the room library for the purpose of arousing interest in these books or for the purpose of sharing one's enjoyment of a certain book. Selections from Dramatic Readers also make excellent assignments for the oral reading period. In some of the rooms the children, under the direction of the teacher, have organized an oral reading club which takes charge of the work on the days devoted to oral reading. Committees outline the work for the semester, and choose, for each oral reading period, selections which center around one common topic or theme, such as the following:

Friday, Jan. 8: Hero Stories

Friday, Jan. 15: Fairy Stories

Friday, Jan. 22: Fables

Friday, Jan. 29: Legends

Friday, Feb. 5: Humorous Stories

Friday, Feb. 12: Stories about Lincoln

Friday, Feb. 19: Stories of Adventure

Assignments are always made three or four days previous to the period in which the selections are to be read so that the children who are to read may have sufficient time to prepare the selections. In all this work on oral reading emphasis is placed upon proper

preparation, for we want the children to feel that no one has the right to bore an audience with an unprepared presentation.

In order to carry out the third phase of our reading instruction, namely, silent reading for pleasure, it has been necessary to equip every room, in which instruction in reading is given, with a library of suitable material for the children who will read in that room. The problem of supplying books has been solved more economically in those schools which have departmental work than in the schools in which every room teacher has charge of her own reading. Many of the teachers have shown a very active interest in this phase of reading instruction and have augmented their room libraries by borrowing books from the public library.

A record is kept of the books read by each child. When the child has completed a book he notifies the teacher who checks him on his reading by asking him some large questions that will test his reaction to the story. Trivial questions are always discouraged.

Below is a list of the books which we are now supplying to our room libraries. This is a growing list, and therefore additions are constantly being made to it. For each grade we have tried to select books which will appeal to the mental maturity of the children in that grade. Some of the books may seem rather easy reading, but we realize that the slow readers will not profit from struggling over material which is too difficult for them, and consequently we have chosen books, not only for the child with average reading ability, but also for the poor, slow reader. Many of the children are able to read from twenty to thirty books each semester.

#### *Fourth Grade*

Jataka Tales: Babbitt  
 More Jataka Tales: Babbitt  
 Old Mother West Wind: Burgess  
 The Tree Dwellers: Dopp  
 The Early Cave-Men: Dopp  
 The Story of the Live Dolls: Gates  
 Red Feather: Morcomb  
 Red Feather's Adventures: Morcomb  
 The Dutch Twins: Perkins  
 The Eskimo Twins: Perkins  
 The Japanese Twins: Perkins

East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon: Thorne-Thomsen  
 That's Why Stories: Bryce  
 Myths of the Red Children: Wilson  
 Holland Stories: Smith  
 Eskimo Stories: Smith  
 Pilgrim Stories: Smith  
 Fifty Famous Stories Retold: Baldwin  
 Three Fairy Tales: Ingelow  
 Robinson Crusoe Retold: Baldwin  
 Pinocchio: Collodi  
 The Later Cave-Men: Dopp  
 The Story of Dr. Doolittle: Lofting  
 The Adventures of a Brownie: Mulock  
 Japanese Fairy Tales: Williston  
 The Story of a Donkey: De Segur  
 Goody Two Shoes

#### *Fifth Grade*

The Lonesome Doll: Brown  
 Sara Crewe: Burnett  
 The Early Herdsmen: Dopp  
 Mopsa, the Fairy: Ingelow  
 The Princess and the Goblins: MacDonald  
 The Bluebird for Children: Maeterlinck  
 The Little Lame Prince: Mulock  
 The Story of Peter Pan (Retold by O' Connor): Barrie  
 Moufflou: Ouida  
 The Filipino Twins: Perkins  
 The Cave Twins: Perkins  
 Toni, the Wood Carver: Spyri  
 The Christmas Porringer: Stein  
 Memoirs of a London Doll: Fairstar  
 A Little Boy Lost: Hudson  
 Gulliver's Travels Retold: Baldwin  
 Mary of Plymouth: Otis  
 Ruth of Boston: Otis  
 Richard of Jamestown: Otis  
 Lisabeth Longfrock: Aanrud  
 The Little House in the Woods: Hunt  
 Dr. Doolittle's Postoffice: Lofting  
 Christmas Every Day: Howells  
 Merrimeg: Bowen  
 One Footed Fairy and Other Stories: Brown  
 Little Mr. Thimblefinger: Harris  
 The Little Tailor of the Winding Way: Crownfield  
 The Wild Swans and Other Stories: Andersen  
 Arabian Nights  
 Understood Betsy: Canfield  
 Davy and the Goblin: Carryl  
 What Katy Did: Coolidge  
 Complete Fairy Tales: Grimm  
 Just So Stories: Kipling  
 The Princess and Curdie: MacDonald  
 A Dog of Flanders: Ouida  
 Some Merry Adventures of Robin Hood: Pyle  
 Fanciful Tales: Stockton  
 The Magic Forest: White



Rose and the Ring: Thackeray  
 Donkey John of Toy Valley: Morley  
 Why the Chimes Rang: Alden  
 Arlo: Cobb  
 Mr. Wind and Madam Rain: De Musset  
 Uncle Remus Stories: Harris  
 The Giant Scissors: Johnston  
 The Monkey That Would Not Kill: Drummond  
 The Bears of Blue River: Major  
 Picture Tales from the Russian: Carrick  
 Paz and Pablo: Mitchell  
 Mr. Rabbit at Home: Harris  
 The Magic Fishbone: Dickens

*Sixth Grade*

The Mermaid and Other Stories: Andersen  
 Don Quixote for Young People: Baldwin  
 The Secret Garden: Burnett  
 Page, Esquire, and Knight: Lansing  
 The Wonder-Book: Hawthorne  
 The Jungle Book: Kipling  
 The Wonderful Adventures of Nils: Lagerlof  
 Toby Tyler: Otis  
 The Scotch Twins: Perkins  
 Krag and Johnny Bear: Setor  
 Heidi: Spyri  
 Undine: Fouque  
 Otto of the Silver Hand: Pyle  
 Biography of a Grizzly: Seton  
 Klak, the Copper Eskimo: Stefansson  
 The Birds' Christmas Carol: Wiggin  
 The Boy and the Baron: Knapp  
 Verotchka's Tales: Siberiak  
 The Wonder Clock: Pyle  
 Troubadour Tales: Stein  
 The Mouse Story (Told by an Old Schoolmaster):  
 With  
 Kari, the Elephant: Mukerji  
 Bannertail: Seton  
 Og, Son of Fire: Crump  
 Dutch Fairy Tales: Griffis  
 The Prince and His Ants: Bamba  
 Little Women: Alcott  
 Little Men: Alcott  
 Complete Fairy Tales: Andersen  
 Stories of Northern Myths: Baker  
 Alice in Wonderland: Carroll

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls: Church  
 Children of Odin: Colum  
 Hans Brinker: Dodge  
 Tanglewood Tales: Hawthorne  
 The Water Babies: Kingsley  
 The Greek Heroes: Kingsley  
 Nelly's Silver Mine: Jackson  
 Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm: Wiggin  
 Story of a Bad Boy: Aldrich  
 Merrylips: Dix  
 Peterkin Papers: Hale  
 Master Simon's Garden: Meigs  
 The Kingdom of the Winding Road: Meigs  
 The Children's Munchausen: Martin  
 Swiss Family Robinson: Wyss  
 Pilgrim's Progress (Abridged): Smith  
 The Girl Who Sat by the Ashes: Colum  
 Kwahu, the Hopi Indian Boy: Moran  
 Lobo, Rag, and Vixen: Seton  
 Treasure Island: Stevenson

By means of this three-fold reading program which we have inaugurated in our fourth, fifth, and sixth grades this year, we hope to enable the children to reach the following objectives before entering junior high school:

1. The ability to comprehend, to retain, to locate information by skimming, to organize, to outline, to summarize.
2. The power to understand and to use an enriched, enlarged vocabulary.
3. The power to concentrate and to study.
4. The ability to entertain an audience with effective oral reading of a selection.
5. An appreciation of good literature.
6. An acquaintance with the best in children's literature. This is every child's heritage.
7. The habit of spending part of one's leisure time in reading worth-while material.

## PUPPET PLAYERS IN DES MOINES

BESSIE BACON GOODRICH\*

*Director of Department of Elementary Education, Des Moines Public Schools*

FIVE years ago the sixth grade children of Lucas School presented the first carefully worked out puppet play which many of us had ever seen, for the Punch and Judy players had not seemed to find their way to our childhood haunts.

At that time our schools did not have an abundance of interesting reading material. An almost desperate desire for more material than was furnished by the usual grade reader led the teachers and the pupils of this school to devise ways and means of purchasing something which would better satisfy the needs of eager boys and girls. A set of King Arthur books was finally procured. At once this active group was transplanted to feudal England and they began to live the lives of bold knights and ladies fair.

One day when interest was running high a member of the group brought to school a paste board puppet show of a tale from Arabian Nights which had been given him, and asked permission to show this to the group. The permission was granted and as the show was being presented to an admiring audience it suddenly occurred to them to ask, "Why not have puppets of our own?" What could be more fascinating than a tournament scene upon a puppet stage! Although the teacher knew little about puppets and had never made or operated any, her pedagogical wisdom led her to follow the enthusiasm of her children.

The Tony Sarg Marionette Book was procured and at once the children were embarked upon their adventure. Through many long days, including Saturdays, they struggled, obstacles mountain high were met and overcome, until finally the play, the stage and the funny little players themselves were completed.

Groups of children, teachers, supervisors, and other interested friends were called in to witness various performances. Then and there these little manikins cast over us all a charm

from which we have never emerged, and from that day puppets have continued to grow in popularity in our community and some of us have become puppeteers of no mean skill.

In the meantime Tony Sarg with his charming marionettes and other traveling puppet players have visited our city. Many of our schools have gone almost en masse to see these productions. Unlike the puppeteers of old who jealously guarded their knowledge these modern players have most generously invited us behind the scenes and shared with us their secrets. They have shown us how the bodies of these

strange folk were constructed and how they were made to dance upon a string. Such experiences have from time to time fed our enthusiasm for these tiny players, and last year all of us gained new inspiration from a public performance given by the children from one of our own schools.



\* This article has been written with the help of the many teachers, boys and girls who have this year made and operated puppet theaters. Especially are we all indebted to Miss Estelle Hayden, Miss Mayna Eastman, and Miss Ruth Weaver of the Art Department who have taught us much of the art of puppet making.

In Des Moines it is the custom in the elementary schools once each year to bring together the work done on at least one subject by the children in all the schools. Last year this exhibit was of the work done in reading and literature and the art which grew naturally out of these subjects in grades three to six. Drawings, posters, sandtables, castles, costumes, little theaters telling the stories of Alice in Wonderland, Water Babies, Pinocchio, 'Lisbeth Longfrock, Viking Tales, Ulysses, Robin Hood, and King Arthur were all there. Poems were charmingly read, dramatizations by real children were given, but nothing so captivated the entire audience as the story of Mr. Dolittle, M. D., played by tiny puppets. The play was made and given by the children from Howe School which stands in the outskirts of the city in an Italian neighborhood. This play was a first attempt and had been brought to this successful finish after many trials and much hard work.

The publication in *THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*<sup>†</sup> of some of the programs given at this time brought from its editor a request that we share with the readers of this publication some of our experiences in producing puppets plays. Faced with this problem we were considerably chagrined when we realized that we had been so engrossed with the fun of production that we had failed to keep any accurate records which were worthy of being passed on to others. Yet we felt that if the telling of our experience would help others to some of the pleasure which the undertaking had brought to us an effort should be made to meet the request.

Accordingly, early in this school year some twenty of the teachers of art and literature in the elementary schools were called together and the problem presented to them. Together they decided that if the interest of their children warranted it puppet plays should be made in their schools and careful records not only of the mechanical elements but of the educational outcomes should be kept.

All recognized that the mere making of

plays had no place in our curriculum except as they became the vehicle for building right conduct habits and attitudes, increased literary appreciation, greater reading ability, a clearer understanding of art principles and more definite skill in the manipulation of materials. With this in mind the following suggestions for the work were listed:

I. Suggestions concerning points to be observed

A. How the purpose was set up.

1. How much came directly for the children?
2. What part did the teacher play?
3. Did the children select the story decided upon by the teacher?
4. Were they conscious of the fact it had been selected by the teacher?

B. How the planning was done

1. The plans made in the literature class
  - a. Selecting the parts which are best suited to puppet dramatization
  - b. Determining the number of scenes
  - c. Selecting and creating the dialogue

Note:

- (1) Did the group suggest dividing itself into committees for any of the work?
- (2) Were there any outstanding leaders at this stage of the undertaking?
2. The plans made in the art class
  - a. Determining the size of the theater
  - b. Determining the size and number of the puppets
    - (1) Necessity of keeping proper proportions
    - (2) Necessity of making figures large enough to be seen by an audience of ordinary size

<sup>†</sup>The Elementary English Review, February, 1925, page 77.



## c. Determining the costumes

- (1) Design
- (2) Materials

## d. Determining color effects and design in order to relate costume and scenery

## e. Determining the lighting, etc.

## f. Determining the necessary mechanical parts of construction

- (1) Of the stage
- (2) Of the dolls

## Note:

- (1) How much of the plan were children able to make at the beginning?
- (2) How frequently did they have to revise their plans?
- (3) Did many new possibilities develop as they proceeded?
- (4) Who were the leaders?
- (5) Were difficulties too great?
- (6) Did some of the children improve in ability to plan?

## C. How the plans were executed

It will be necessary to study this stage of the procedure very carefully and to note:

- (1) What the children did first
- (2) How and where materials were secured
- (3) Evidences of leadership
- (4) Evidences of fellowship
- (5) Evidences of cooperation
- (6) Evidences of unselfishness
- (7) Evidences of artistic ability
- (8) Evidences of mechanical ability
- (9) Need for more careful reading of text
- (10) Need for further reading to gather additional data, etc.

## D. How the work was judged by the pupils

- (1) Were they critical?
- (2) Were they easily satisfied?

- (3) Were their standards of work improved? Etc.

## II. Educational outcomes

- A. Did the undertaking and the result bring pleasure to the children?
- B. Did it give pleasure to others?
- C. Was there a growth in ability to set up good purposes for themselves?
- D. Was there a growth in ability to plan?
- E. Was there growth in ability to carry a plan through to satisfactory completion?
- F. Was there a growth in ability to rightly evaluate one's own work?
- G. Did the undertaking result in improved technique?
- H. Did it result in greater appreciation?
- I. Was there growth in patience?
- J. Were voice quality and enunciation improved?
- K. Note disadvantages

Following this those who were to direct the making of the puppets held a conference with the director of fine and industrial arts, who discussed with them several methods of constructing and manipulating string puppets.

Two types of stocking or cloth puppets are shown in Figures 1 and 2 which are so simple in construction that children of the upper elementary grades can make them. The pattern for Fig. 1 has the seam down the middle of the front and back which makes a life-like profile possible. Fig. 2 shows a pattern with the seams at the sides. This is an easier form of construction, but the flat face is not so effective. Allowance for seams is indicated by dotted lines.....and stitching for joints by dash lines———. Flexibility is secured at the top of the legs and knees and elbows by a double row of stitching at these joints. With the exception of the arms, the doll is made in one piece, the arms being fastened to the body with the over and over stitch. The feet and hands should be weighted with shot, sand, marbles, or ball bearings, to give the balance necessary for natural movements.

A more satisfactory method is to construct the body in sections as shown in Fig. 3.

Note the method of joining the sections with tape, which prevents bending in the wrong direction.

Another method of constructing puppets is to make for each part of the body an armature or framework of strong wires, bent and fastened together to form a skeleton. These are wrapped with cotton batting to the desired size, covered with strips of cloth and painted with show card colors, tempera or oil paint.

Sometimes elaborate puppets are carved from wood, and the sections fastened together with staples or tape.

If the time allotted for the construction of the puppets is limited, commercial dolls having cloth, celluloid or rubber bodies may be used by disjoining and rejoining in order to give the desired life-like action.

If elaborate heads are desired either permadello or papier maché may be used.

The entire head may be made of permadello, but as this makes it heavy and expensive, a ball shaped foundation of newspaper pulp may be made. This is done by tearing newspaper into tiny bits and soaking until soft or boiling over a fire. When the ball is dry the permadello will stick to the surface and the features can be modeled. Features should be exaggerated to be effective from a distance. Deep set eyes show better than those that are raised. To make the papier maché head, first make the model out of plasticine. Tear a thin piece of blotting paper into small pieces and place them in a saucer of water to moisten. Spread an overlapping layer of wet blotting paper over the plasticine

model, covering the entire head. While still damp smear with thick boiled flour paste. When thoroughly dry cover the head with narrow strips of tidy tape.\* When this is dry cut the papier maché in half from ear to ear and over the top of the head in order to remove the plasticine. The papier maché

head will then be in two pieces, which may be easily put together again with more tidy tape. Either sandpaper the rough edges to a smooth surface or stretch and paste a thin piece of silk crepe over the head to make a fine texture on which to paint.

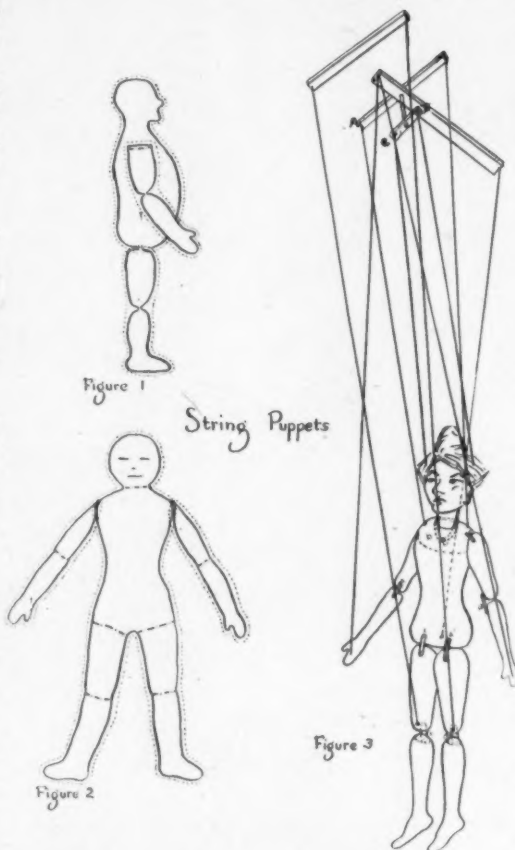
This type of puppet is manipulated by means of strings. Black linen thread is preferable, as it is strong and does not show plainly. Two strings attached to the head just above the ears keep the puppet in balance and prevent constant twisting. Strings should be attached to each leg just above the knee and to each arm at

the wrist or hand as indicated in Fig. 3. A string attached to the center of the lower part of the body enables the puppet to bow without slumping. If the head is not movable the head strings may be attached to the crosspiece A-B in Fig. 3 and the crosspiece C-D omitted.

The manipulation of the puppets can be made easy by keeping the movement slow and by trying one movement at a time. The dolls should be held so that their feet touch the floor, as a ridiculous impression is given if they either swing in the air or drag on the stage floor.

If animals are necessary toy dogs, horses,

\* This is the narrow strip of glued paper used for fastening paper in which packages are wrapped.



monkeys, etc., can be purchased, disjointed, weighted, restrung and then are manipulated in a manner similar to those of the figures, or the patterns may be entirely designed and constructed by the children.

An important part in the planning of a puppet show is the study of color and arrangement. Costumes, stage scenery, curtains and proscenium arch should be studied in relationship to each other. First sketches may be made in pencil showing plans for interior or exterior scenes and costumes. The children will soon see the need of study of further reference material to aid in such problems as designing a chair for an interior scene, or trees for a landscape. When a successful plan is made in pencil, there follows the problem of carrying it out on the larger scale required for the puppet stage, using either water color or cut paper.

In making the stage and the puppets themselves certain general directions apply to all types.

1. The stage must be in correct proportion to the puppets. For a stage whose di-



Figure 4

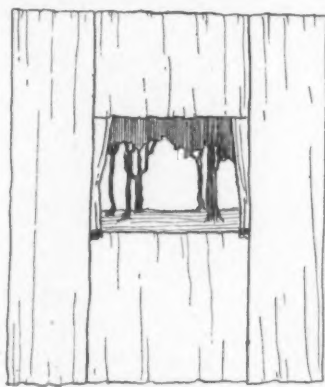


Figure 5

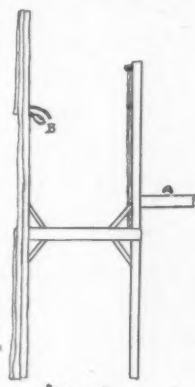


Figure 6

mensions are 2'-6" high, 3'-6" wide, and 2'-4" deep, the puppets should be from 12" to 15" high.

2. The framework of the stage is most satisfactorily made of wood, while heavier board may be used for the proscenium arch.
3. If string puppets are used the side of the stage must be left open (see Fig. 6 and

illustration, page 161) to allow the puppets to be taken on and off the stage.

4. When the play is given the stage must be placed upon a table or platform to make it possible for even the smallest audience to see. For a stage of the dimensions shown above the operators should stand either on the same level as the stage floor or on a higher platform as shown by A in Fig. 6. The operators may be concealed by curtains hung above, below and at the sides of the stage as shown in Fig. 5.
5. The stage lighting may be made effective if kept simple. Footlights if used alone cast unnatural shadows. A few lights placed in the proscenium arch as indicated by B in Fig. 6 give more satisfactory results.

When these details concerning the construction had been discussed with the group there followed a period of watchful waiting for the time when the pupils should either of themselves determine that they wanted to turn some bit of dramatic material into a puppet play or for a time when the teacher might offer a

suggestion concerning it which would be enthusiastically accepted by the group. In almost all instances this part of the procedure was skilfully handled by the teacher and the group was thereby launched upon an undertaking whose interest held them in its grip for many weeks.

Brief accounts of these plays as they were worked out in two schools and reported by



the teachers of those schools are included here.

#### THE CASADY PUPPET SHOW

CASADY is an elementary school in which there are no grades above the sixth. Last year after the 6A children had seen the puppet play of Dr. Dolittle given by the children of Howe School, and had attended a performance of the Jean Gros puppets in Robin Hood and Uncle Wiggly they were inspired to make a puppet play of their own. At the same time a few very ambitious children attempted making puppets at home using simple figures of jointed wood and small paste board boxes for the theaters. Thus it became quite the logical thing this fall for the 6B group to start a puppet show. They chose to play some scenes from King Arthur because they were deeply interested in these tales in their literature class at that time, and it was in this class that all of the preliminary plans were made. Scenes suitable for puppet dramatization were selected and the dialogue determined upon here. Some of this work was done by the group as a whole but the major part of it was accomplished through committee work.

When the first rough draft of the play had been completed the children were ready to begin work upon the more fascinating part of their undertaking, the building of the stage and the making of the puppets. To make a play stage and to bring one of these little characters into being is a thrilling experience for anyone.

The size of the theater was one of the first questions to be considered and was determined in part through the experience of last year. It was felt that this first theater had been too small for practical purposes. After much discussion it was decided to make the new one 18" high, 36" wide and 20" deep. For the small room in which this play was given these dimensions proved to be quite satisfactory.

Having determined the size of the stage, the players must be made to fit. Last year's puppets were too large. Much measuring and careful calculation helped them to select 10" as the proper height for the dolls.

When these preliminary plans had been

made the class was divided into various committees to carry forward the work. The girls chose to make and dress the puppets and to construct the curtain. The boys were to build the stage, make the scenery and other properties. Responsible leaders were chosen as chairmen and the work started.

Old white stockings became the basis for most of the puppets themselves. These were stuffed with cotton which the girls found on hand in the building. Heads, bodies, arms, and legs appeared in marvelous fashion. Everyone looked at home for scraps of materials from which costumes might be made. Modern mothers and teachers furnished their shorn locks for Queen Guinevere and all the brave knights. Two of the most renowned of King Arthur's court were dressed in tin foil armor obtained from Oh Henrys and similar sources. The final color effects in costumes and stage decorations were largely determined by the curtain of blue velvet which was given by the drapery department of one of the large department stores. One of the girls brought her mother's old silk skirt which was dyed an appropriate yellow and used most effectively as a drop curtain.

The wood which the boys needed for building the stage was obtained from supplies on hand in the building. The beaver board used for the proscenium arch came from a kind parent's attic and the stain was supplied by another interested father. The boys had many wild and complex ideas for lighting their theater ranging from power derived from cast-off radio batteries to a spot light from a small moving picture machine. The plans finally died a natural death and it was decided to place a bracket lamp on the table to shine down on the puppets. As Casady has no assembly room a large sky-lighted hallway has to serve this purpose. Because it is impossible to darken this place, elaborate lighting would have been ineffective. When they came to the construction of properties, only the most necessary were made—an anvil, a fountain, round table, chairs and bed.

As the children worked, distinct evidences of leadership began to appear. The sup-

posedly stronger children had been originally chosen as chairmen of the groups, but one boy, chairman of the properties committee, failed because he was unable to get cooperation in his committee. As a result, this group made the poorest showing of any. The other chairmen were able to keep harmony in their groups and to keep them busy. When questions and difficulties arose, the children first consulted their chairman. He in turn either decided the matter himself or asked assistance of the teacher. This group work quickly showed up one or two idolent children, but they were not allowed to loaf for very long. Some groups finished sooner than others and were either transferred or given other work to do. The sewing and making of patterns seemed to be the most difficult problem for children of this age. As the girls have had little experience in sewing they took an undue amount of time for that part of the work. With so many different activities proceeding at the same time and only half-hour periods for work it was difficult for the instructor to give much individual help.

The class did not realize at first the bigness of their undertaking, but with the purpose ahead to present the play in assembly, they struggled on. As the work progressed the children became extremely critical of each other's work and of their own. One boy worked for days constructing a Round Table, but the group was not satisfied and made another. Several with little ability found it very hard to please the group, while some of the more talented and ambitious worked on several projects. There was a distinct growth on the part of many in their ability to plan and to carry these plans through to completion. Because there could be so little individual instruction, improvement in technique had to come almost entirely as a result of individual experimentation but there were many evidences of such growth. The children's interest in the finished product was a powerful incentive for this.

The chief disadvantage in the entire undertaking seemed to be the long period of time necessary to complete it, but the children's

interest did not lag and the deep satisfaction which the final giving of the play brought them was convincing proof of its real worth.

In connection with the undertaking just described each committee was asked to make a written report. The following account of the work of the committee on puppets is typical of all which were handed in.

#### *Report of Committee on Puppets*

First we asked for anyone who could, to bring white stockings to school. After we had collected enough stockings to start with, we planned what height the puppets should be. We agreed on ten inches. With this length we just had to cut off the foot of the stocking. Next we sewed the top of the stocking together. Then we were ready to stuff and sew the different parts of the puppets such as arms, legs, head, body. Our teacher took one of the puppets home and brought it back dressed like King Arthur. She did this to give us an idea how to dress our puppets. When we had our puppets all dressed we strung them with heavy thread, as shown in Tony Sarg's book. Ten of us worked very hard on these puppets.

*Ruth Mann, Chairman*

#### THE ELMWOOD PUPPET SHOW

THIS school has in it all grades through the eighth. The undertaking here was quite the most pretentious one of all. Three different plays were produced by three different classes, In the Days of Giants, Robin Hood, and Treasure Island. Probably no children in the city have been so completely absorbed by the problem as have these boys and girls and no results have so nearly approached that of professional workers. Not many days since, the dramatic critic from one of our largest newspapers in the Middle West chanced to visit the school and was so impressed with the work these children were doing that he plans to travel many miles to visit their first public performance. Not being very familiar with the modern school he expressed great amazement that children today are being given so rich an opportunity for creative self-expression.

In the literature class one group of chil-

dren spent approximately ten one-hour periods reading and discussing *Treasure Island*. When the story was finished a discussion arose concerning what they would like to do with the story. One group of seven boys decided to make a puppet show; another group wished to dramatize a scene themselves; still another group wished to make a series of posters illustrating the story. All were set to work under the direction of leaders chosen by themselves.

The leader of the puppet group was a boy who has a wide reading background, and who is extremely conscientious about all his work. He was apparently chosen because the rest of the group had confidence in his conception of the result. The first thing, of course, was the choosing of the scene to be dramatized. Many were suggested. That finally chosen was the one on shipboard where Jim Hawkins returns to find the wounded Israel Hands in sole possession. This was selected because there were so few characters in it and because of the novelty of a shipboard scene.

Then the writing of the play began. The pupils—all boys—sat about one table and made suggestions, proposed speeches, and discussed whatever stage business seemed necessary. As the work progressed, it became apparent to the teacher that there was trouble. The leader was thought by other boys to be too "fussy." Upon investigation the teacher discovered that he, in his anxiety to have a good play, was exceedingly unhappy if every detail did not go exactly as he thought it should go. The question of leadership was discussed, and finally the group decided to divide itself into two sections, one section under the old leader working on the first half of the scene, and the other section, picking it up at a convenient break, and completing it. All seemed quite satisfied with this arrangement, even the original leader, who seemed to recognize that he was not handling so large a group successfully. The play was then completed practically as it was given.

In assigning parts, it was suggested that one person should do all the reading, while others worked the puppets. It was soon discovered that this meant uncoordinated action.

It was finally arranged that those who made the puppets should be allowed the privilege of manipulating them. Others seemed quite delighted with their task of ruling the waves, rocking the boat, managing the curtains, and prompting the speakers, although the latter task is entirely unnecessary. The coming of Tony Sarg's Marionettes, who played *Treasure Island* one evening, gave a great impetus to the work and suggested many new ideas. When the children came to the art teacher with their plans for making the puppet plays she spent some time in telling them something of the history of these little players. She traced for them their development from the time when they were used for purely religious performances to the modern puppet plays as they are presented by such artists as Tony Sarg and Mrs. Maurice Brown. These discussions seemed to give to the children not only a new interest in their undertaking and a new sense of its dignity but also helped to establish standards for their work.

One of the first problems which presented itself as they came to the actual making of the puppets was the need of deciding upon their proper size. This immediately led them to consider the size of the stage upon which they were to play. A small theater for another purpose had been constructed previously by this group. This experience together with the knowledge of the size of the room in which they wished eventually to present their play led them to agree upon dimensions which were approximately 3' 6" wide, 2' 4" deep, and 2' 6" high. They had learned enough of puppet playing to know that if the proper effects were to be secured all objects upon the stage must be kept in proper proportion. This called for much study of correct size relationships and most careful measuring.

The largest puppet made for this stage was Will Scarlet who was 17" tall and the smallest puppets made were the dwarfs for *In the Days of Giants* who were 5" and 6" high. The type of construction used for the various puppets was determined by the children responsible for that particular character. Some had body and head made entirely of cloth,



some cloth bodies and heads of paper pulp with the face covered with a thin coating of permadello clay, and one had a wonderful body carved entirely from wood with head of papier maché. In the end the lack of uniformity in construction was strongly criticized by the children who felt that the general effect would have been better had there been greater similarity. The last step in the process of construction is the stringing of the puppets and the making of controls.

When the problem of costumes presented itself many class discussions were held and much reference reading was done to gather accurate information concerning the costumes of the country and the time in which the scene was laid. As they read many sketches were made and in many instances preliminary posters were made showing details of costumes and scenic backgrounds. Materials for the costumes as well as other properties for the stage were eagerly supplied by the children, gathered from their attics at home or secured from friendly storekeepers. Great ability was shown in using materials near at hand and those which could be secured without cost.

For the construction of the stage itself quite complete and satisfactory plans were made at the very beginning. The children's ability to do this was undoubtedly the result of their previous experience. However, the problem of placing and shifting scenery and the construction of various pieces of stage property such as a ship, a cave, a forge and anvil, called for much additional study and many reconsiderations. The problems of lighting and curtain manipulation called for much ingenious planning.

Throughout the entire undertaking there seemed to be manifested splendid evidences of leadership as well as of ability to work under direction. There were many examples of willingness to do that part of the work which might have seemed like drudgery had interest not been so strong, and there were also numerous instances where the workers were entirely willing to stop the work which they were doing to help another in difficulty. There was marked growth in the ability to

give and take intelligent criticism in an impersonal manner. It was noted, however, that there was a decided tendency to be easily satisfied with crude results in sewing and costuming, especially among the younger children. The whole undertaking offered unusual opportunity for the exercise of artistic judgment concerning the art principles involved in their sketches, in the designs and color harmonies selected for their costumes, in making the scenic backgrounds and planning the interiors where balance of furnishings had to be considered, in the selection of good line for the proscenium arch, and in planning for the proper proportions for the marionettes.

Written records of much of the work in this school were also kept. One child's summary of the historical background of puppet plays is given here.

#### *The History of Marionettes*

The first puppets of which we know were used in the Orient. These were mostly shadow figures although there were a few rounded figures which were manipulated by strings. These puppets were found in India and China. Later in Europe the story of Mary and the Christ Child was often played by puppets. Because of this these little figures were often spoken of as "Little Marys." In this way they came to be known as marionettes, marion coming from Mary and ette meaning small. The people who took charge of the puppets were called puppeteers. At that time families of puppeteers traveled from city to city like the circus families of today. The art of making puppets was handed down from generation to generation and nobody, not even the people who worked them, were allowed to know how they were made.

There are three kinds of puppets, cloth puppets which work by strings, rail puppets which slide along rails, and the puppets used for "Punch and Judy" shows which do not have feet, but have a body, arms and head, and are hollow. The one working them puts his hand in the body using the first two fingers to move the arms and the other three for the head.

Tony Sarg is one of the best puppet makers of today. Once when he was living in London in "The Old Curiosity Shop" he became interested in collecting toys. At that time he attended many puppet shows, one of which was a show given by a Mr. Holden. Although Mr. Sarg could not go behind the scenes to study the puppets, he had sharp eyes and soon saw how they were made and worked. He also decided that Mr. Holden was an uneducated man because his costumes did not fit the characters. Soon he began to make puppets of his own. He used cloth puppets worked by strings. He so improved the cos-

tumes and stage settings that our puppet shows today are artistic and true to life.

Burton Joseph.

THROUGHOUT the undertaking help has come to us from many sources but the most specific information has been gained from the following books:

McIsaac: Tony Sarg Marionette Book—  
B. W. Huebsch.

Anderson: The Heroes of the Puppet Stage  
—Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Whanslaw: Everybody's Theatre—Wells,  
Gardner, Darton & Co., London.

### *Point of View in Language Teaching*

(Continued from page 153)

TECHNICAL GRAMMAR. The common errors of speech are related to only a few rules of grammar. The technical grammar that should be taught in elementary grades is listed below:

Sentence study; declarative, interrogative, exclamatory; subject and predicate.

Capitalization as needed.

Formation of plurals; nouns and verbs.

Possessives.

Punctuation; period, question mark, exclamation mark; simple use of comma, hyphen, apostrophe, quotation marks.

Functional use of parts of speech.

Mahoney—Standards in English.

Parker—Types of elementary teaching and learning.

Charters—Curriculum construction.

Bonser—Elementary school curriculum.

Baltimore county course of study.

Montana course of study for rural schools.

Kansas City course of study in English.

Minnesota course of study.

California Bulletin 2D.

Chicago 1923 course of study.

LaRue—The child's mind and the common branches.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sheridan—Speaking and writing English.

Driggs—Our living language.

Leiper—Language work in elementary schools.

#### OTHER HELP

Personal conferences with Dr. Bonser and Dr. Hillegas of Teachers College, Columbia University.

## EDITORIAL

### *What Plan for the Summer?*

THE TEACHER of English must be ever training to meet the requirements of life in the classroom. If he is not, life in the classroom will become intolerably dull and uninteresting to the children.

The teacher has a professional responsibility that is inescapable. Each year the nature of this responsibility becomes more apparent. In silent and oral reading, new techniques have been developed that put the children forward years in the enjoyment of books, if the teacher but does his part and brings with him to the classroom the results of research and study. It is his responsibility to make his teaching more effective each year, because each year greater enlightenment is resulting from scientific experimentation and study.

Never before has a passing year contributed so much to the equipment of the teacher of reading. Dean Gray stated, in the April Review, that seventy-five studies of reading were published during the year July, 1924, to July, 1925. Other subjects may not have received so much prominence, but there have been, in every phase of English teaching, so many findings of a scientific nature during the past two years, that the teacher who has not been alert can scarcely realize how out of date and old-fashioned he may become in so brief a time.

If the teacher is to "keep pace with the advancing curriculum in English," he must study. Research Bulletins Nos. 4 and 5, Volume III, published by the National Education Association, list the following courses in elementary school English published since January, 1923: Language, Grammar, Composition, and English—101; Reading and Literature—63; Spelling—31; and Penmanship—25. The significance of all this is that the teacher must seek new professional equipment in order to do his part in the English classroom. If his courses of study have recently been rewritten he must know how to

meet the new requirements; if the courses of study have not been revised recently, he must assist in rewriting them.

Teacher training institutions everywhere recognize the problems of the teacher of English and are offering special courses to help him. Summer schools this year are prepared to be unusually helpful. Teacher training institutions in every section of the country are offering attractive courses. Teachers of English in eastern schools will find relaxation in a trip to the State University of Montana where Grace Hazard Conkling and others are giving particularly interesting courses in literature, or to the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin, or other universities or normal schools in the Middle west, or West. Teachers in the West have equally attractive prospects in the training institutions of the East.

Now is the time to investigate the opportunities open for summer study and travel. The progressive, professionally alert teacher of English will plan wisely, and make the best of these opportunities.

#### THE JUNE REVIEW

THE JUNE Review will feature books for children. The number promises to be unusually attractive with articles as follows:

How a Child Helps Me Illustrate—*Dugald Walker.*

Books That Appeal to Children—*Elva S. Smith.* Head of Children's Department, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

Children's Books and Reading—*Sadie Bush* Boys' and Girls' House, Toronto, Canada.

Recent Books For Children—*Effie L. Power.* Director of Work With Children, Cleveland Public Library.

Vacation Reading For Children—*Siri M. Andrews.* Children's Department, Brooklyn Public Library.

What Children Like in Recent Books—*Clarissa Murdoch.*



STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC.  
REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912,

Of *The Elementary English Review* published monthly, except July and August at Detroit, Michigan for April 1, 1926.

State of Michigan ( ss.  
County of Wayne )

Before me, a *Notary Public* in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared *Anna C. Fowler*, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the *Business Manager* of *The Elementary English Review* and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, *C. C. Certain, Detroit, Mich.*; Editor, *C. C. Certain, Detroit, Mich.*; Business Manager, *Anna C. Fowler, Detroit, Mich.*

2. That the owner is: (If the publication is owned by an individual his name and address, or if owned by more than one individual the name and address of each, should be given below; if the publication is owned by a corporation the name of the corporation and the names and addresses of the stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of the total amount of stock should be given.) *C. C. Certain, 6505 Grand River Ave., Detroit, Mich.*

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ANNA C. FOWLER,  
Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 7th day of April, 1926.  
(SEAL)

HARRY W. FOWLER.  
(My commission expires January 9, 1930.)

*On Attaining a Common Standard*

(Continued from page 157)

steps in the theme. Though his version was not an exact reproduction and was considerably shorter, he had learned something of the meaning of purpose and plan in theme building.

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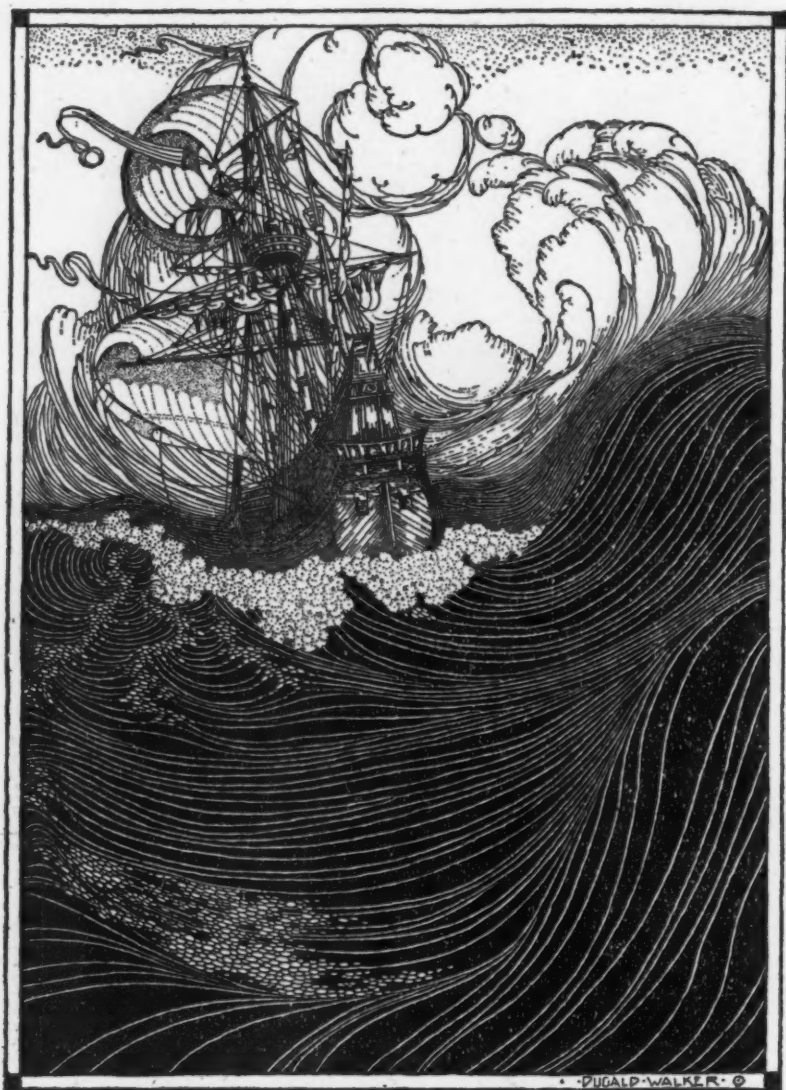
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A drawing by Dugald Walker illustrating the poem "Sea Fever" by John Masefield. From "Rainbow Gold," an anthology edited by Sara Teasdale.

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